

# Quarterly NEWS-LETTER

OF THE BOOK CLUB OF  
CALIFORNIA

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## THE "NOBLEST MONUMENT"

ONE of the outstanding publishing events of history was, as most collectors know, the appearance at London in 1611 of the first edition of the King James Bible. It may safely be said that no other book in English has exerted a tithe of its influence or approached its incomparably wide distribution. In the three and a quarter centuries since the first copies of the King James version were given to the world it is claimed that the presses producing this "Best Seller of the Ages" have literally never stopped turning.

The 1611 "He" Bible (so called from the misprint in the Book of Ruth, iii, 15: "*He* went into the citie.") is

of course a landmark in bibliographical as well as religious history. The possession of a complete and perfect copy is rightly regarded as lending distinction even to the greatest collections, public or private. It is with some pride, therefore, that the Club announces that it has acquired an incomplete copy of the 1611 "He" Bible and that members are shortly to be given an opportunity to secure a leaf from this outstanding rarity.

Although an announcement giving full details of this, the Club's next publication, will be ready shortly, the work has so many points of interest that we cannot forbear outlining a few of them here. As a text to accompany the original leaf—one of which will be bound with each copy—the Club has been fortunate enough to secure permission from John Livingston Lowes (author, among other distinguished works, of *The Road to Xanadu*) to print his essay, *The Noblest Monument of English Prose*, a brilliant study of the King James Bible viewed as a literary masterpiece. In addition, the work will have a foreword dealing with the printing of the 1611 edition by Louis I. Newman.

The number of leaves available limits the edition to 300 copies. It is being printed, in a typographical style harmonious with the accompanying leaf, by The Grabhorn Press. The price has not yet been definitely determined although it will probably be between \$5.00 and \$7.50 a copy. Publication is scheduled for about April 15. As stated, an announcement and order-card will reach members soon.

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¶ Some half a dozen copies of *The City That Has Fallen*, William Marion Reedy's little book on San Francisco, printed for the Club by Johnck & Seeger and long listed as out-of-print, have recently come to light. Orders will be filled as received. The price is \$1.00.

CONTEMPORARY CALIFORNIA  
SHORT STORIES

SOON after the December News-Letter was distributed, a member wrote:

"I was interested to read that the new group of pamphlets will present the work of living California authors instead of those of earlier days. . . . Too often here in California we are inclined to believe that the only local literature worth preserving was written before 1870, or before 1900 at the latest. In the past the Club has shared this belief, if one may judge by so many of its publications. . . . In the new series you have an opportunity to prove that . . . much of the work now being written in California will stand comparison with that of the earlier periods, not excepting the 1860s. But much will depend on what authors and stories are chosen. . . ."

These are interesting observations, although they seem to place the Club under an unexpected and certainly unpremeditated obligation. When the short story series was decided on there was no thought that the stories selected might be made a basis for comparisons between contemporary California literature and that of the past. The hope was—and is—merely that by inviting each of six writers to choose his, or her, favorite story, the result might prove to be an interesting and perhaps significant group of examples of the art of the short story as it is currently practised in California. This was the extent of the Club's purpose; those who wish to read other meanings into the series do so on their own responsibility.

Part One, Stewart Edward White's The Hold-Up,

printed by Johnck & Seeger, was distributed a few days ago. Whatever other significance members may be inclined to attach to it, it is unlikely that there will be any question of the story's interest or of the author's skill in telling it and his admirable handling of the California locale. Certainly the varied natural beauties of the Sierra springtime have seldom been so persuasively or so charmingly presented in fiction.

About April 15, members will receive Part Two: a story by Gelett Burgess entitled *A Murder at the Dome*. Readers will find this no less interesting than Mr. White's tale, although it is widely different both in treatment and locale. The pamphlet will be designed by the University of California Press, at Berkeley. Number Three, ready in June, will present one of Charles Caldwell Dobie's distinguished stories of San Francisco, in a format designed and executed by John Henry Nash. Both stories, like the others, will have forewords by their authors, written for the series.

The authors, titles and printers of the remaining three pamphlets will be announced as arrangements are completed.

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#### LINCOLN COLLECTIONS IN CALIFORNIA by CARL A. GERKEN

*Editor's Note: These seasonable comments on the public and private collections of Lincolniana in California were written for the Club by Carl A. Gerken, ex-President of the local Lincoln Society, an organization devoted to perpetuating the memory and teachings of the Great Emancipator. Other surveys of various California collections on similar specialized subjects are planned for future issues.*

PROBABLY nowhere in the world is the story of Lincoln's life and works better known, or his memory

more revered, than in California. Although the state never saw him, it is known that it was much in his mind. He seriously considered making California his home and several times expressed a desire to bring his sons here upon his retirement from office.

Lincoln had numerous close personal contacts with Californians, and the people of the state more than once gave him their support in no uncertain manner; in '61, California was one of the deciding factors in his first election to the Presidency. The depth of the affection of its citizens was strikingly shown when news of his assassination reached California. What happened that night in San Francisco is part of local history. No section of the country showed greater grief. On the day of his funeral at Washington a procession was held at San Francisco, followed by memorial services, the like of which will probably never again be seen. Local papers devoted entire issues to the assassination and the events following it. The community observed a period of mourning that continued a full year and at its end the *Alta Californian* published a special Memorial Edition.

With such a background, it is not unnatural that a great interest in the man should have persisted through the years, and that California should now be particularly rich in collections of Lincolniana. Today no state, save only Illinois, surpasses it in the number and size of Lincoln collections, or in rarity of material. In a short sketch it is obviously impossible to include all the collections. Mention will be made therefore only to those of which the author has some personal knowledge.

Among the institutional collections, that of the Huntington Library, at San Marino, is outstanding; it

is probably the most comprehensive collection of Lincoln material extant. Its nucleus is the Lamon collection, mostly in manuscript form—a vast quantity of data used by Ward Hill Lamon in the preparation of his *Life of Abraham Lincoln*, published in 1872, and still considered one of the important source books on Lincoln. The Lamon collection includes scores of autograph documents, several thousand letters from Lincoln's contemporaries, three volumes of source material used by another biographer, Herndon, besides much other matter. The Library contains also the important Judd Stewart collection, consisting of upwards of 3,000 books, pamphlets and manuscripts. Mr. Huntington later acquired many outstanding items from the collection of Major William H. Lambert, who was termed by Judge Daniel Fish, Lincoln's bibliographer, the man "to whom all Lincoln devotees bow as the chief of their tribe."

The manuscripts in the Huntington collection number in excess of 200, including a discharge issued by Lincoln as a captain in the Black Hawk War, dated 1832, and the Ellsworth letter, written to the parents of Colonel Ellsworth upon his death and believed by many to be superior to the much better known Bixby letter. Another most interesting item is a scrap-book compiled by Lincoln and containing notes in his hand, together with newspaper accounts of his speeches on Negro equality. This was made for Captain James Brown for use in the campaign of 1858.

In Library Park, Redlands, stands the Lincoln Shrine, which houses another important collection. This is at once a shrine to Lincoln and a memorial to Emory E. Watchorn, a veteran of the World War and son of the

donor. The number of volumes in the Watchorn collection is not known to the writer, although its library is quite extensive; it is especially rich in fine bindings and limited editions. The Shrine contains numerous Lincoln mementos, the chief of which is the Bernard bust; this has been made the central object around which the collection is grouped.

The south has two other institutional collections, both in college libraries. One is the William Wyles Lincoln Library at Santa Barbara Junior College, a collection numbering some 6,300 volumes, of which 700 are strictly Lincolniana. Mr. Wyles, the donor, began in 1928 to gather what he thought would prove a modest Lincoln collection; today it is the largest "working library" devoted to Lincoln in the state, and it is still growing.

The second college collection resembles the Wyles Library in that its donor remains active in its further upbuilding. This is the collection at the University of Redlands, founded by Dr. Ernest M. Freeman. It now numbers about 1,800 items, of which some 600 are magazine excerpts; there are also numerous photographs and Lincoln mementos. Like the Santa Barbara collection, it has been assembled mainly with a view to its practical use by students and admirers of Lincoln.

The two important institutional collections in the north are those of the University of California and Mills College. The Berkeley collection numbers in excess of 1,000 items and includes, in addition to the standard works, a number of important rarities. Mention should be made, too, of the Bancroft Library, housed in the same building. Although it is not Lincolniana, this huge collection is most important to

Lincoln students because of its abundance of contemporary material. The Mills College Library contains the collection of Dr. Ervin S. Chapman which, together with additions, now numbers above 200 items, including a number of interesting manuscripts and broadsides. Many city libraries in California also have considerable Lincoln collections. Space permits mention of only one, the Pasadena Library, the collection of which, numbering some 150 items, was donated by the Abraham Lincoln Club of that city.

Of the numerous private Lincoln collections in the state, three may be regarded as outstanding. Dr. Milton H. Shutes, of Piedmont, possesses some 1,500 items, 600 of which are books. Pamphlets, eulogies, sermons and magazine excerpts, dating from 1860, make up the balance. The keystone of this collection is in first editions of three rare biographies: Whitney, Lamon and Herndon. It contains also the seldom seen life of Binn who, with Charnwood, represents the English point of view. Although Dr. Shutes' collection also contains many contemporary newspapers, reminiscences, and lives, as well as first and inscribed editions, its primary aim is usefulness to the student rather than size and completeness only.

Without doubt the largest private collection in the West, and perhaps in the country, is that of F. Ray Risdon, of Los Angeles. Its items run into the thousands and include, besides books, pamphlets and magazine articles, autographs, prints, badges, medals and similar mementos. In recent years Mr. Risdon has specialized in privately printed Lincolniana, limited editions and inscribed and autographed material.

The collection of Allen Henry Wright, of San Diego,

numbers above 1,000 books and pamphlets, autographs, pictures, medals and other material; it is particularly rich in memorial items issued soon after Lincoln's death. Other California collections deserve far more extensive mention than can be given them here. Among them is that of Harry E. Barker, for many years a dealer in rare Lincolniana at Springfield, Illinois, now resident in Los Angeles. Some years ago Mr. Barker, with M. L. Houser of Peoria, Illinois, began collecting copies of books known to have been in Lincoln's library, or to have been read by him; their success is attested by the fact that they have assembled above 100 titles.

The dean of Lincoln collectors in California is Frank Durbin Blakeslee, D. D., of Los Angeles, now in his ninety-second year. An interesting personal item in his collection is an autograph given by Lincoln to Dr. Blakeslee's father, a member of the Sanitary Commission. He has a numerous and well-selected group of books, sermons and magazine excerpts.

Mention, necessarily brief, of other collections must include those of ex-Senator Samuel M. Shortridge, of San Francisco, numbering about 500 books and pamphlets; of Ralph C. Lindstrom, Los Angeles, some 200 items dealing mainly with the political and religious phases of Lincoln's life; and of Lewis D. Johnson of Pasadena who, as an artist, stresses the pictorial side of the subject, his collection containing many rare prints and photographs. Dr. Homer K. Pitman and John H. Kimball, of San Francisco and Berkeley respectively, have well-selected general collections. The writer's collection, numbering some 500 items, emphasizes autographed copies of books by modern writers on Lincoln, and contemporary newspapers of Lincoln interest.

I cannot better conclude this too-brief survey than by offering a word of encouragement to those who may be considering starting a collection of Lincolniana. Let no one be deterred by a fear that the field is overcrowded or that every desirable item costs a fortune. While it is true that the prime rarities demand a heavy purse and are hard to locate, it should be remembered that the Lincoln literature is so vast and is constantly being so augmented that the newcomer will hardly face a scarcity of worth-while material. Moreover, as his Lincoln collection grows so likewise will his knowledge and admiration of the man himself, and in this he will find his chief and most lasting reward. He will find, too, among older and more experienced Lincoln collectors, a willingness to share their hard-won knowledge and to give him valuable advice. As one who is much the junior of most of the collectors mentioned here, and who has received such favors from their hands, it is a pleasure to make this acknowledgment. In particular, I wish to thank Mr. F. Ray Risdon for his kindness in making available information I have used here about the collections in the south.

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NOTES ON PUBLICATIONS

by ALBERT M. BENDER, Chairman, Publication Committee

THE response of members to the Club's latest publication, *A Sojourn at San Francisco Bay in 1816*, has been most gratifying. Ninety per cent of the edition was sold within a month after publication. Later orders have so reduced the balance that at this writing only some half-dozen copies remain.

This showing, the best in several years, is of course

partly due to the importance of the book's subject-matter and the beauty of its printing. But it is also another indication of a trend recently discernible among collectors: the return of interest in press books.

Encouraged by this renewal of interest, the Club plans a considerably more active publishing program this year than for some time past. A preliminary announcement of the first 1937 publication is made elsewhere in this issue. Clarence King's *The Helmet of Mambrino* (for which Francis P. Farquhar is writing a foreword) and an edition of Cato's *Moral Distichs*, first printed by Benjamin Franklin, are both scheduled to appear this year. If, as seems likely, these are well supported by the members, the Club will select one or two new titles from among a number of attractive prospects now under consideration.

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### ELECTED TO MEMBERSHIP

BELOW is a list of the new members elected since December 1, 1936:

Member		Sponsor
Leod D. Becker	New York, N. Y.	Elmer Adler
Wilder Bentley	Berkeley, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
Dr. Alice Bepler	San Francisco, Cal.	Dr. Harold Brunn
Boston Public Library	Boston, Mass.	Oscar Lewis
Dr. Donald A. Charnock	Los Angeles, Cal.	Dr. Elmer Belt
Robert M. Clarke	Los Angeles, Cal.	F. C. Van Deinse
William Roy Clary	Ashland, Oregon	Robert E. Dodge
R. E. Combs	Visalia, Cal.	John Howell
Lester Cowan	Hollywood, Cal.	Garfield D. Merner
Dr. A. K. Dunlap	Sacramento, Cal.	Dr. J. Roy Jones
Judge Douglas L. Edmonds	San Francisco, Cal.	Carl E. Melugin
Mrs. Kathleen George	San Francisco, Cal.	George Fields
G. M. Greenwood	Piedmont, Cal.	R. O. Simon
Miss Barbara Kahn	San Mateo, Cal.	Frank Schwabacher
Miss Mary E. Keast	Stanford University, Cal.	George R. Keast
Louis Le Hane	Palo Alto, Cal.	M. C. Threlkeld, Jr.

Miss Ruth E. Lunder	Los Angeles, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
W. A. Philpott, Jr.	Dallas, Texas	Oscar Lewis
Harold Raines	Berkeley, Cal.	Oscar Lewis
Mrs. May Schofield	St. Helena, Cal.	Mrs. Charles M. Cole
Thomas D. Stevenson, Jr.	Piedmont, Cal.	Mrs. M. E. Heymes
Mrs. Geraldine M. Swett	San Francisco, Cal.	Joy Lichtenstein
Miss Zella Travers	Long Beach, Cal.	Oscar Lewis

At the February meeting, the Board of Directors authorized an increase of the Club's membership from its former maximum of 500 to 600. Primarily, the step was taken because the dues from 100 additional members is necessary to give the Club a safer margin of income on which to operate, and to permit desirable extensions of its activities. The Club hopes to accomplish this result during 1937. To that end, a new folder outlining the Club aims and activities is being prepared. If present members will send us the names of friends who might be interested we shall be glad to forward them copies.



¶ With this number the News-Letter completes its fourth year. Suggestions for broadening the scope of the little publication and increasing the number of its pages are made from time to time by members, and it is hoped presently to put some of them into effect. For the present, however, Club finances make it prudent to retain the usual 12-page form, even though this allows space to print only one article on collecting in each issue. The June article, by the way, will describe the Californiana collection of the State Library at Sacramento.

¶ Now that the new series of keepsakes, *Contemporary California Short Stories*, is under way, members are reminded that the prompt purchase of a slipcase is the best insurance against the loss or damage of the pamphlets. By obtaining a case early and by putting the various parts in it as they arrive the series will be kept intact and in good condition. The new cases, uniform with those supplied for last year's series, will be ready by the end of March. The prices remain the same: \$2.00 for all-cloth covering; \$3.00 for cloth with morocco back (for sales in California add 6c and 9c respectively).